
People
SPECIAL
STAR WARS
THE FORCE AWAKENS
EDITION
THE STARS OF
STAR WARS
DECEMBER 2015
Exclusive Photos
Interviews with the Cast
Secrets from the Set
First Look at New Characters



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Jason Fry • *The Weapon of a Jedi: A Luke Skywalker Adventure*

JOURNEY TO *STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS*

For fans who are counting down the days until December 18, these all-new stories provide hints and puzzle pieces that will make watching (and rewatching) the film that much more epic.



An original story about two friends on opposite sides of the galactic civil war, Gray's novel is a must-read both before and after fans see *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

Claudia Gray • *Lost Stars*

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STAR WARS: **THE FORCE AWAKENS**

SPECIAL
December 2015

WELCOME!

As you'll see in this special issue dedicated to *Star Wars: The Force Awakens,* the cast and crew are excited to bring this beloved franchise back into theaters. On Dec. 18, when audiences finally get to see Episode VII of the galaxy's greatest sci-fi series, all the carefully guarded secrets of this next-generation story will be revealed. In the meantime the stars and creative minds behind *The Force Awakens* shared exclusive photos, behind-the-scenes secrets and fascinating insights into the movie's characters with *People*. Who is Luke Skywalker now? How does Rey become a heroine? Why is BB-8 so darn cute? Read on … and may the Force be with us always.

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Cover Courtesy Lucasfilm

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38 YEARS AFTER GEORGE LUCAS FIRST TRANSPORTED FANS TO A UNIVERSE OF JEDIS, DROIDS, STORMTROOPERS AND LIGHTSABERS, **THE SAGA CONTINUES** WITH NEW HEROES AND NEW VILLAINS IN THE HIGHLY ANTICIPATED EPISODE VII

Sneak Peek

A LONG TIME AGO IN A



ESCAPE FROM JAKKU
TIE fighters chase the *Millennium Falcon* into a downed Star Destroyer.

GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY....

STAR WARS THE FORCE AWAKENS

EPISODE VII



OFF AND RUNNING Rey (Daisy Ridley) and Finn (John Boyega) flee a stormtrooper. "I think fans of action will love the movie," says director J.J. Abrams.





LASTING LOVE? The fate of Princess Leia and Han Solo's relationship is a secret. But Carrie Fisher, Harrison Ford and Mark Hamill had input into the script. "J.J. and I were very cognizant of wanting them to be happy," says co-screenwriter Lawrence Kasdan.



FORMIDABLE FOE As stormtrooper commander Captain Phasma, Gwendoline Christie "just killed it," Abrams said. "I am glad that a character has been designed that is visually as stunning as hers is, because she deserves it and the fans do too."







PASSING THE TORCH
Oscar Isaac plays pilot Poe Dameron. Abrams says, "Rey and Finn and Poe and the others, these characters are living in a world whose history is that of the films we've seen already, what George [Lucas] created."



HANDS UP
Finn, Chewbacca and Han appear to be captured by stormtroopers, echoing scenes from the original trilogy. Chewbacca actor Peter Mayhew is coy about how the new movie ties in: "You'll have to wait and see."

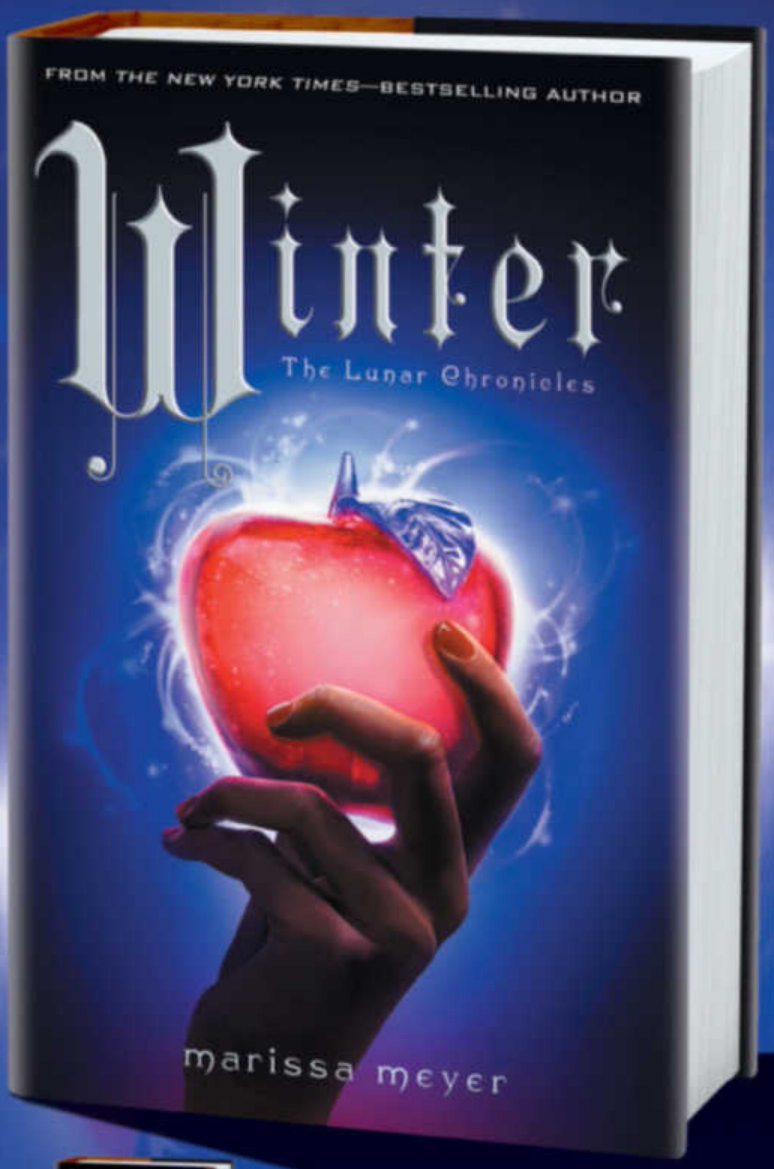


STILL THE FASTEST HUNK OF JUNK
The *Millennium Falcon* blasts across Jakku. "We went to great lengths to make the *Falcon* exactly as it was in the original films," says art director Gary Tomkins.

(PAGES 6-7): © 2015 LUCASFILM LTD; (PAGES 8-9): DAVID JAMES/ © 2015 LUCASFILM LTD; (PAGES 10-11) CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: © 2015 LUCASFILM LTD; DAVID JAMES/ © 2015 LUCASFILM LTD(2). (THIS PAGE) FROM TOP: © 2015 LUCASFILM LTD(2)

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STAR WARS
SHAPES



FRIEND OR ENEMY? Finn and Poe cross paths when the pilot is held by the First Order. "It's very much that feeling from the first movie with this young cast," says Kasdan. "It's a very fresh feeling to start up again and have such wonderful new faces and fresh energy."



A NEW RIDE Rey's vehicle is an updated version of Luke Skywalker's classic speeder, says Jake Lunt Davies, who designed it. "It references a tractor for an industrial feel, but it's a simple silhouette. There's a simplicity about *Star Wars* designs."

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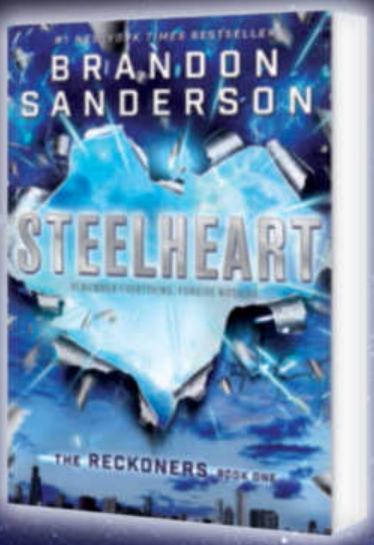


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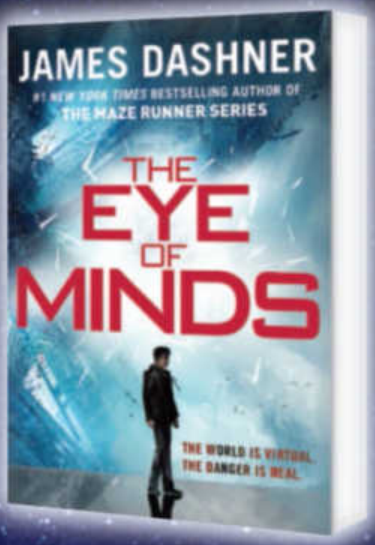
Thirty-two years after the evil Empire was defeated in *Return of the Jedi*, a new group called the First Order "came out of conversations about what would have happened if the Nazis all went to Argentina but then started to work again," Abrams has said. "Could the work of the Empire be seen as unfulfilled? And could Vader be a martyr?"

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AWAKEN YOUR INNER BOOKWORM



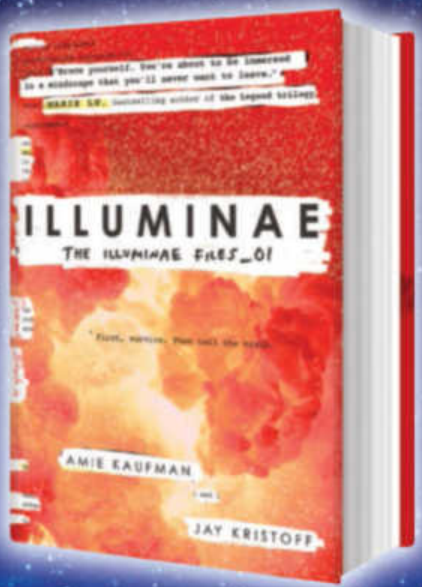
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CREATURE FEATURES
Chief of creature and droid effects Neal Scanlan says *Star Wars'* nonhuman creations capture the series' "charm and charisma and a sort of feeling of connection."



ON A ROLL
Mischievous droid BB-8 is an update of R2-D2, says Scanlan. "J.J. drew the original design for BB-8 on a little napkin. The idea of using a droid that can roll and navigate things using a wheel or a ball is very current. I'm sure there will be more B units or BB-8-type droids in the future."



MEET BOBBAJO
Creature-concept designer Lunt Davies created the expressive Bobbajo—and slipped in an Easter egg. "A little creature from *Return of the Jedi* is one of the caged creatures," he says. "I think a fan spotted that already."

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THE NEXT GENERATION
Billie Lourd, Carrie Fisher's daughter, plays a top-secret role. *The Force Awakens* "is a new story for a new generation," says Abrams. "This is a movie that is all about characters who themselves have never seen *Star Wars*."

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TAKING WING
Art director Gary Tomkins says the X-wing fighters in the new movie were made to look like the fighters from the earlier episodes. "You still recognize them as an X-wing, but somehow it looks like there is 30 years development."

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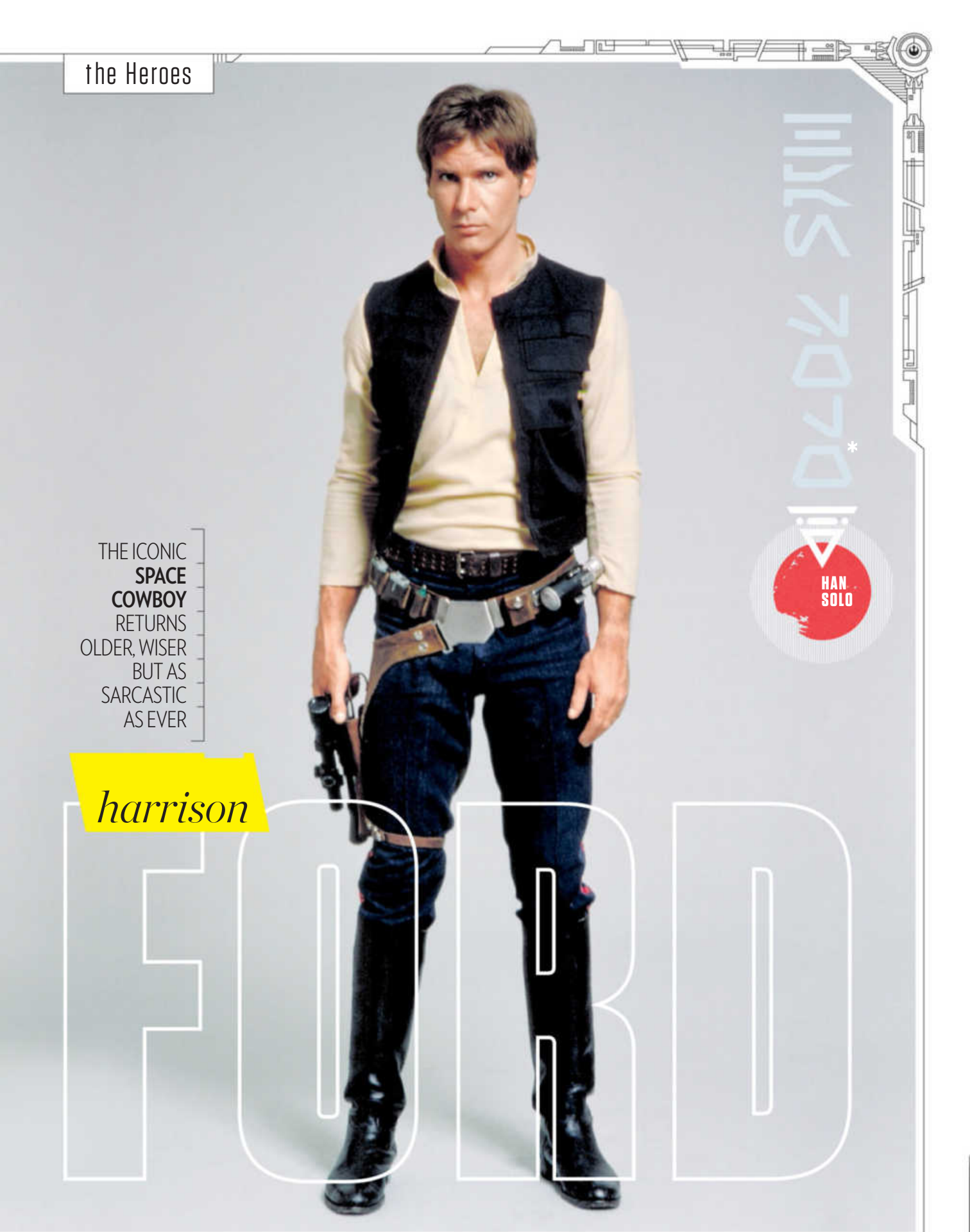
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ULTIMATE FACE-OFF Villainous Kylo Ren (Adam Driver) confronts Finn and Rey. "With Daisy, John and Adam, there have never been characters quite like them in *Star Wars*," Kasdan says.



HAN SOLO*

THE ICONIC **SPACE COWBOY** RETURNS OLDER, WISER BUT AS SARCASTIC AS EVER

harrison FORD

* **What's this?** The character's name written in Galactic Basic, the *Star Wars* universe's most common language.



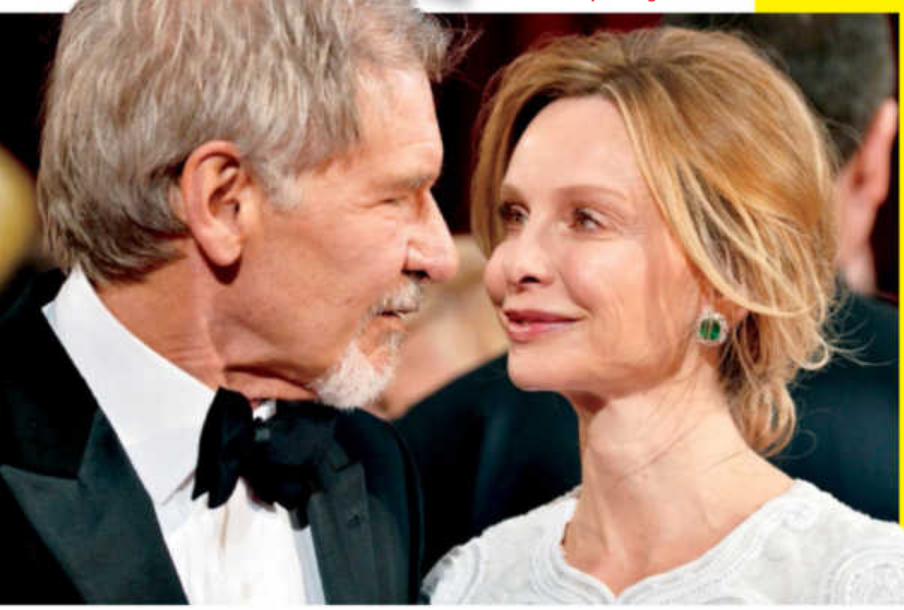
Ford was 34 when Han Solo first blasted onto screens in May 1977.



Harrison Ford can be as irreverent about *Star Wars* as Han Solo is about the Force. When Oscar Isaac asked the famous *Millennium Falcon* pilot for advice on taking the controls of a spacecraft in *The Force Awakens*, "he said, 'It's fake,'" recalls Isaac. "'And it's in space, so none of that applies.'" The original *Star Wars*, after all, was "a silly movie but wonderfully made," as Ford described it to *People* after the 1977 premiere. Looking back on it today, he says, "I understood that it was more of a fairy tale than a science-fiction story. I thought I had what I needed to take the job and take the money."



PLAYING THE HERO
In drama class at Ripon College in Wisconsin, Ford told *People*, "I was terrified to get up in front of people, but I really enjoyed the storytelling part." He went on to marry actress Calista Flockhart in 2010 and has filled the hero role on- and offscreen, flying rescue missions as a helicopter pilot near his Wyoming ranch.



Until then, the onetime carpenter was best known for a bit part in George Lucas's first big movie, 1973's *American Graffiti*. But his embodiment of Han Solo as a cocky smuggler punched his career to light speed. "I refer to George as the author of the early chapters of my life," says Ford, who did insist on a costume change from the start: "The first iteration had a large blue Peter Pan collar, which I resisted."

The actor, of course, would go on to iconic roles in *Indiana Jones*, *The Fugitive* and more throughout his remarkable four-decade career—and until recently the 73-year-old star thought he had long since closed the door on his surly alter ego. (He famously pushed Lucas to kill Solo in order to give *Return of the Jedi* more emotional heft; Lucas declined.) In 2014, when asked on Reddit about the "Han shot first" controversy—referring to Lucas's rerelease changes to a shoot-out scene in the first movie that seemed to retroactively soften Solo—Ford had a gruff come-

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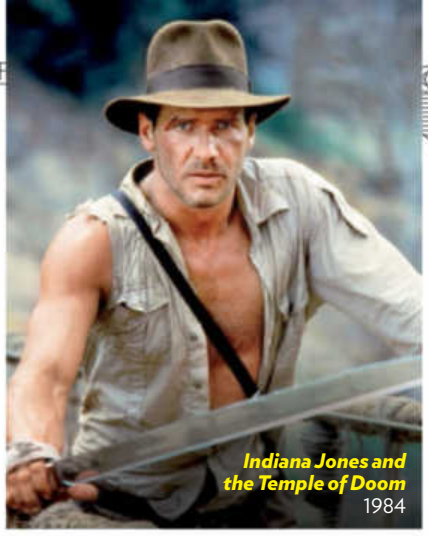




STRIKING BACK
George Lucas originally considered the likes of Al Pacino and Kurt Russell for the role of the *Millennium Falcon* pilot. In early screen tests, he relegated the no-name Ford to reading Han's lines for Luke and Leia auditions. But the riled-up Ford captured the spirit of Solo. Ford told *People*, "I was grumpy by nature in those days."



BACK IN BUSINESS Costume designer Michael Kaplan says, "I wanted Han Solo's costume to feel familiar, since Harrison Ford is the same actor playing the same character. Of course he's older, but he's still in terrific shape."



Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom 1984

back: "I don't know and I don't care."

But at his surprise Comic-Con appearance this past summer, just months after crash-landing his vintage World War II plane in a heroic Solo-esque maneuver, Ford said he thought the new script "was really remarkable." Stepping back into Han's boots "might have felt silly," he says, "but it didn't."

One key mystery in *The Force Awakens*: Did Han and Leia become a happily married couple with kids? Ford, a father of five who has been married to actress Calista Flockhart since 2010, seemed to understand those characters' attraction better than anyone, replying to Leia's "I love you" admission in *The Empire Strikes Back* with his now-legendary "I know" ad lib instead of the scripted "I love you too." While Han and Leia have a teary embrace in the *Force Awakens* trailer, Ford can't talk yet about the script. What is clear is that Han's brash dismissal of the Force as a "hokey religion" in the first film has transformed into the awe of the trailer's buzziest line: "It's true, all of it: the Dark Side, the Jedi. They're real."

Beyond that tease, Ford is staying tight-lipped—something that comes naturally to the taciturn actor: "I'm very comfortable keeping my mouth shut." What he will say, though, is that working on the film "was a pleasure. It was fun to see old friends." And he recognizes the film's vast appeal: "That the stories have been passed down generationally, that's significant." Just don't expect him to get *too* gushy about it all. How will he celebrate outside of the big premiere? "I'm not. That will be enough, thank you very much."

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PRINCESS LEIA

carrie FISHER

THE SPIRITED **GALACTIC PRINCESS** TALKS LIFE AND LOVE IN THE *STAR WARS* UNIVERSE—AND OH, YEAH, THAT BIKINI



Star Wars "enabled me to travel extensively, meet people I would not have likely met and diet extensively," jokes Fisher.

Call Carrie Fisher's most infamous ensemble whatever you like, but it "was no bikini," the actress told *People* in 1983. Princess Leia's metal slave get-up from *Return of the Jedi* "didn't go where you went. After shots, the prop man would have to check me. He'd say, 'Okay, t--- are fine, let's go.' " It was a curious way to enter cinematic immortality. Though the daughter of Hollywood legends Eddie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds was used to fame, *Star Wars* was a different universe. "I knew that something enormous was likely going to impact my life from this film," Fisher says now, "and that there was absolutely no way of understanding what that was or was likely to be."



BORN A STAR Eddie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds welcomed baby Carrie in 1956.



THREE GENERATIONS Fisher (left) posed with her mother, Debbie Reynolds (center), and daughter Billie Lourd in 2011. "I was born into something much larger than myself," she told *People* in '83. "I ended up in something much larger than myself."

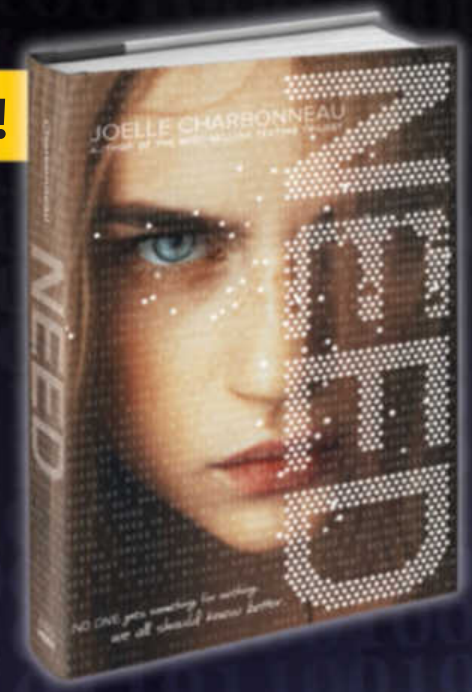
Not that Fisher, 59, has allowed George Lucas's fantasy world to dwarf her own work. She's been busy between Leia stints writing novels and screenplays (including 1990's semiautobiographical *Postcards from the Edge*, which starred Meryl Streep and Shirley MacLaine), doing theater and mental-health activism and making movies. *The Blues Brothers*, *Soapdish*, *Hannah and Her Sisters* and *When Harry Met Sally*... wouldn't be the same without Fisher. She was also busy having a life: She was married to singer Paul Simon in the 1980s, then later had a daughter, Billie, with agent Bryan Lourd. (Billie also appears in *The Force Awakens*—see page 52—as well as the TV series *Scream Queens*.) But there's no denying that *Star Wars* turned Fisher into an icon and gave her a Hollywood family just as famous as the one she was born into.

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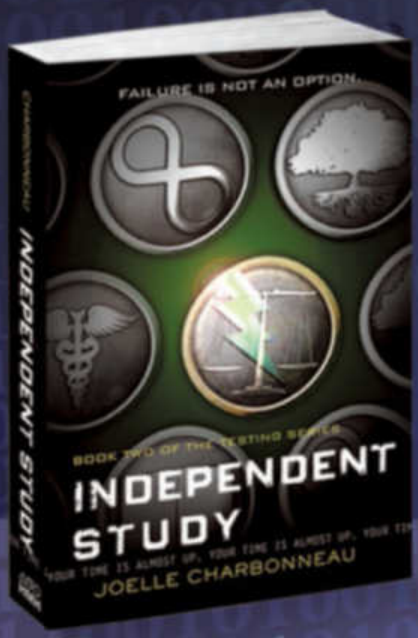


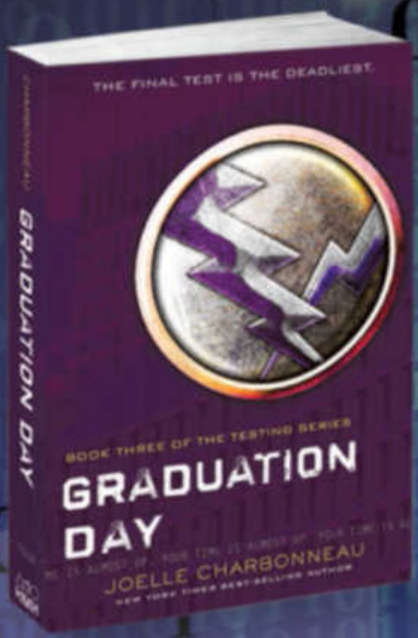
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Star Wars
1977



The Empire Strikes Back
1980

A LOOK BACK AT LEIA
Is Princess Leia still the same galactic badass that she was when she and Han Solo (Harrison Ford, above) first met? "Yes, with a caveat," says Fisher, coyly. "Yes and no . . . and yes."



Return of the Jedi
1983

"It was like summer camp," Fisher told *People* in 1978 of shooting with Harrison Ford and Mark Hamill. They hit amusement parks, had food fights and played out the sweetest incestuous love triangle ever committed to film. And they understand their characters' relationships—and their own—better than anyone. "Han and Leia have conflict, but they stick to it. They take the trouble," Fisher explains. "The key with Harrison is taking the trouble to get past any trouble."

Ironically, one memorable star did move on: Leia's lamé lingerie sold at auction this past October for $96,000. It isn't overstating things to say that the suit—and *Star Wars*—are *still* changing Fisher's life so much that it's hard to tell just how. "The facts aren't all in yet," she says on the eve of Episode VII's release. "Can I get back to you on that?"



When Harry Met Sally . . .
1989

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THE **ORIGINAL HERO** OF *STAR WARS* IS ALSO THE TRILOGY'S BIGGEST FAN— AND HE'S READY FOR A COMEBACK

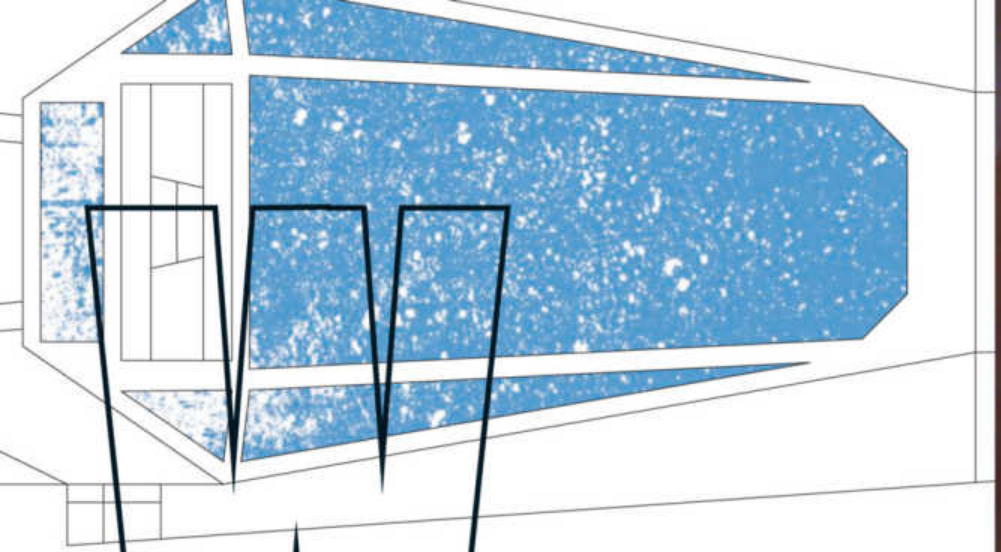
LUKE SKYWALKER

mark HAMILL

FROM LEFT: © LUCASFILM LTD.; DAVID ZAUGH



"I became an icon, like Mickey Mouse," Hamill told *People* in 1981 of his famous role.





"Who is Luke Skywalker?" That's the question J.J. Abrams has said that drives the story of the *Star Wars* relaunch. At press time the hero of the original trilogy was MIA from the trailers (and even the toys) except for a brief voice-over and a split-second scene of what just may be his robotic hand touching R2-D2. But three decades after Mark Hamill first portrayed the naive young hero, he still marvels that the character endured at all. "When you find out that the only woman you really fell head over heels with is your sister, it's telling you something," he said this summer at Comic-Con. "I had a feeling I'd probably wind up like Sir Alec [Guinness, Obi-Wan Kenobi] in the first movie, living in some igloo out in the desert, with no human contact, just droids."



PROUD DAD Hamill (with daughter Chelsea and wife of 37 years Marilou) told *People* that his proudest accomplishment outside of *Star Wars* has been his family: "I'm so lucky to have a wonderful family that has been supportive and with me through the years."

The cast member who's as much fan-boy as he is star, Hamill, 64, never really left his alter ego behind—even as he redefined his career as a leading voice actor. (That's him cackling as the Joker in *Batman* animated movies and TV shows.) He's a fixture at fan conventions and directed a 2004 mockumentary set at Comic-Con, *Comic Book: The Movie.* Yet no one was more surprised than Hamill when he was told he'd be reprising his role as the world's most famous Jedi once again. Says the star: "This was an unexpected thrill."

Hamill was 25 and a rising star when he first signed onto George Lucas's sci-fi project, breaking his commitment to the TV series *Eight Is Enough* to take the risk for a career-defining role. The middle child of seven kids whose Navy-officer father had moved the family around the world, Hamill fit the bill for Lucas's description of Luke in the *Star Wars* script: "a lovable lad

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: ALPHA/LANDOV; DAVID JAMES/©2015 LUCASFILM LTD.; ©LUCASFILM LTD.; ©WARNER BROS./EVERETT; LUCASFILM LTD./TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

RETURN OF A JEDI

Filmmakers are secretive about the crucial scene of Luke's return (above: what may be his robotic replacement for the hand lopped off by Darth Vader). The scene "was the most intimidating part," says cinematographer Daniel Mindel. "I just hope the fans enjoy the story for what it is."



With R2-D2 in *The Empire Strikes Back*.



Facing off with Darth Vader in *Empire*.

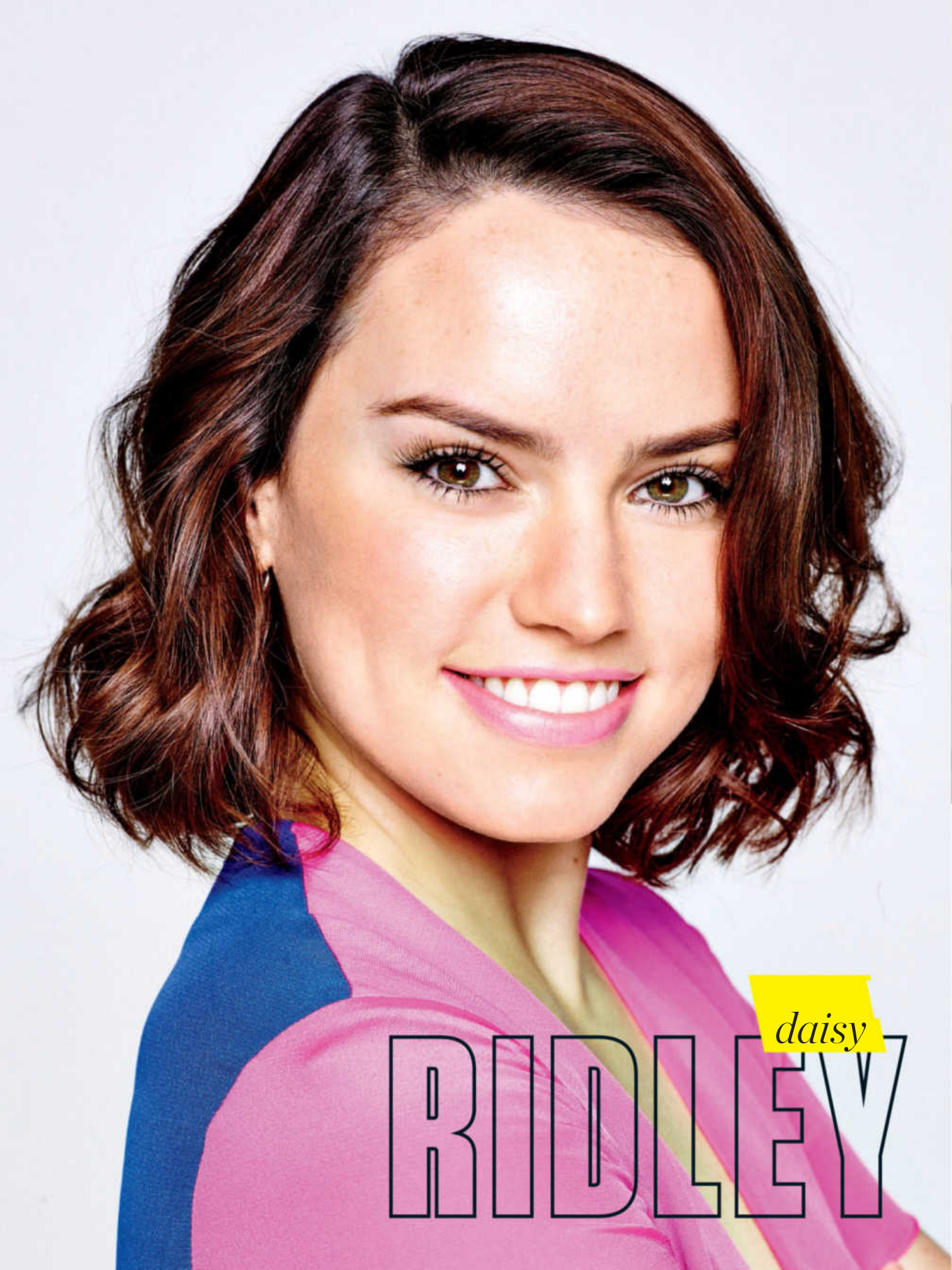
with a prize-winning smile."

Although many fans believe he suffered a car crash right before shooting 1980's *The Empire Strikes Back,* Hamill first spoke to *People* about the accident in 1977: "My nose was wiped right off, and my face had to be rebuilt." A few years later, he shared his frustration with his post-*Star Wars* career options. "The offers I've been getting are mostly for horror movies," he said. "I didn't go to drama school for five semesters for that. I was ready to soar."

He'll finally have the chance to return to the global spotlight again with *The Force Awakens*. "If everyone was up for it, I was up for it," he says. "I wouldn't have missed it for the world."



HIS DARK SIDE
Hamill has been the voice of the Joker in TV, movie and game projects since 1992's *Batman: The Animated Series*.


daisy
RIDLEY

REY

HEROIC LONER
Ridley says Rey, a scavenger on the planet Jakku, is "very solitary."



AGE: 23
HOMETOWN: LONDON
KNOWN FOR: PBS' *MR. SELFRIDGE*

SHE'S NOT A FAN GIRL.
"I wish I had one of those stories like, 'Oh my God, this is the first time I saw one of the films!' Unfortunately, I don't. I remember seeing one of them in the cinema, but my mum and I were trying to figure out which one. I watched the prequels first and the originals afterward, and then only when I was auditioning."

SHE DIDN'T ALWAYS WANT TO BE AN ACTOR.
"I actually wanted to be a zookeeper when I was 5, which is funny now because I'm actually against zoos. I was somewhat naughty as a child. My parents found a performing arts school, and it kept me really busy. And I loved the drama classes."

IT'S HER FIRST MOVIE EVER!
"Because I hadn't made a film before, the whole thing was scary, and I had to get over the overwhelming fear of it. That was the hardest thing."

REY IS 'A REGULAR GIRL.'
"She's not royalty, she's not a princess, she's just an ordinary girl. She has her own strength though. I couldn't have asked to play a better role."

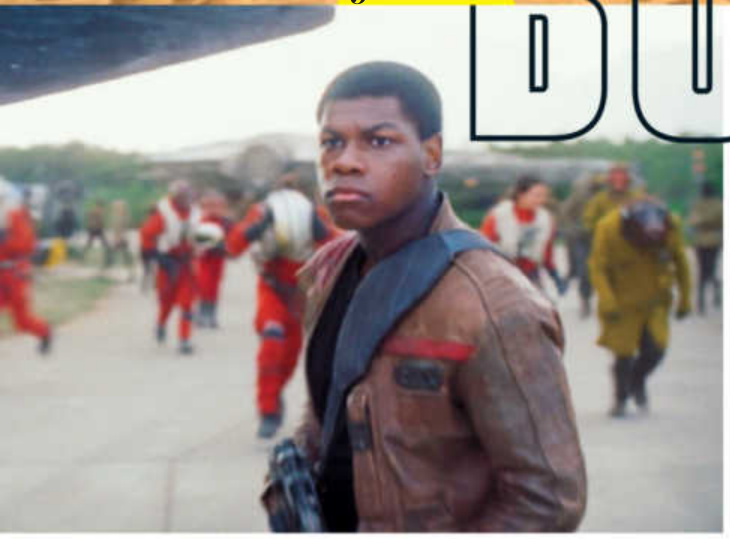
WHAT'S NEXT?
"I don't have a dream role after this. I'm just going to plod through life and see what comes my way."

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: ERIC RAY DAVIDSON/TRUNK ARCHIVE; DAVID JAMES/©2015 LUCASFILM LTD(2)



ON THE RUN
A stormtrooper gone AWOL, Finn (Boyega) charges by a smoldering First Order spacecraft on the planet Jakku.

john BOYEGA



AGE: 23
HOMETOWN: LONDON
KNOWN FOR: *ATTACK THE BLOCK*

HIS FIRST DARTH WAS NOT VADER.
"The first time I saw a *Star Wars* movie, *Episode I—The Phantom Menace*, was about 2003," Boyega says. "I was playing with a Darth Maul action figure and found out this guy was part of a whole new world called *Star Wars*. I'm a '90s baby; don't judge me."

HE LEARNED FROM THE MASTERS.
"I watched audition tapes of Harrison Ford and Mark Hamill from the original films. It was several months of auditioning, learning lines and developing the character of Finn."

HE HAD A CARBONITE MOMENT.
"When J.J. Abrams sat me down and said, 'You're the new star of *Star Wars*,' literally everything just froze. The whole world was perfect in that one moment."

HIS DESERT SWEAT IS NOT CGI.
"I'm in a stormtrooper outfit in the middle of the Abu Dhabi desert shooting during the day. It was really, really sweaty. Thank you, J.J."

HE HAS NEW RESPECT FOR C-3PO.
"In the old behind-the-scenes footage of Anthony Daniels, he had to be in that C-3PO costume throughout the whole film. So I didn't complain with the stormtrooper suit. I took some ice baths and made sure we got the shots."



BATTLE-TESTED
Boyega shows steely resolve in *The Force Awakens* and in his first film, 2011's space-invaders saga *Attack the Block* (right).

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: ERIC RAY DAVIDSON/TRUNK ARCHIVE; SCREEN GEMS/PHOTOFEST; © 2015 LUCASFILM LTD.; DAVID JAMES/© 2015 LUCASFILM LTD.


FINN

POE DAMERON

oscar

ISAAC





MASTER PILOT
An ace X-wing flier, Dameron takes after his mom, a Rebel pilot in the Battle of Endor.

AGE: 36
HOMETOWN: MIAMI
KNOWN FOR: *INSIDE LLEWYN DAVIS*

HIS FIRST *STAR WARS* MOVIE WAS *RETURN OF THE JEDI.*
"It was the first movie I saw in the theater. I remember seeing that with my dad. In some unconscious way it made a huge impact on me."

HE HAS A SOFT SPOT FOR VADER.
"The moment when Darth Vader's helmet comes off and you see he's just a fat, sad old man was pretty intense. He was so vulnerable underneath there. The power of storytelling and of family is why *Star Wars* has endured."

HE JOINED OVER FRENCH ROAST.
"It was wild and surreal that I was in a cafe in Paris with J.J. as he was pitching me the new *Star Wars* film. But it was also exciting that I could bring something to this story."

HE HELPED CREATE POE.
"We collaborated on the character and what it could be. Poe evolved from the initial idea to what ended up being in the film."

HE ALMOST LOST HIS LUNCH.
"The first time I was in the X-wing cockpit it was very hot, and I had just eaten, which was not a good idea. At one point my lunch almost came up. I bet when Poe first went to flight school he probably had something very similar like that happen. I just breathed, and luckily the feeling went away."



IMPRESSIVE RANGE, MOST IMPRESSIVE
Isaac's star turns have included a besieged businessman in 2014's *A Most Violent Year* (with Jessica Chastain, above) and a folksinger in 2013's *Inside Llewyn Davis*.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: ERIC RAY DAVIDSON/TRUNK ARCHIVE; © 2015 LUCASFILM LTD.; A24/PHOTOFEST; ALISON ROSA/CBS FILMS/EVERETT


MAZ
KANATA

AGE: 32
HOMETOWN:
NAIROBI, KENYA
KNOWN FOR:
12 YEARS A SLAVE

SHE CELEBRATED WITH *STAR WARS*.
"Growing up in Kenya they would play *Star Wars* during public holidays. So it was something I could look forward to. I watched it five or six years in a row."

THE SERIES SPOKE TO HER.
At one point in the original trilogy, "one of the characters spoke in Kikuyu, which is a language in Kenya, so I really connected with it because it felt like it was inclusive of everyone."

SHE LOVES BEING A CGI PIRATE.
"I had been wanting to work in motion capture," she says. When the role of Maz Kanata, a pirate who once owned a castle that hosted smugglers and travelers, "was offered to me, I was so excited. I've always loved the work, like Andy Serkis and then Zoe Saldana in *Avatar*. And of course I got to work with J.J."

SHE'S ALL ABOUT KEEPING *STAR WARS* SECRETS.
"I love keeping the secret, knowing something no one else knows!"

WHAT SHE CAN'T WAIT TO DO NEXT.
"I am really dying to be in a comedy. And I'd love to be in, like, a love story, you know? How about some of that?"

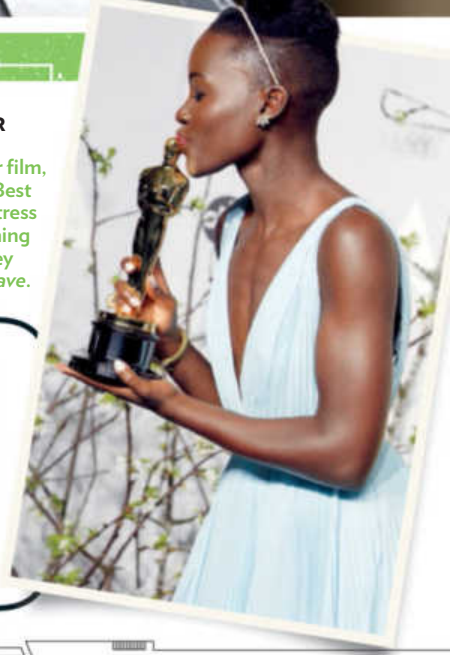


WHO'S THAT SPACE PIRATE? Nyong'o leapt at the chance to act in motion capture "just like Andy [Serkis]."



12 Years a Slave 2013

HER OSCAR MOMENT
In her first major film, Nyong'o won Best Supporting Actress for her wrenching turn as Patsey in *12 Years a Slave*.



lupita NYONG'O

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Photograph by CHRIS MCPHERSON



BUN HEAD
Her character's relationship to Leia hasn't been revealed, though they share a go-to hairstyle.

billie LOURD

AGE: 23
HOMETOWN: LOS ANGELES
KNOWN FOR: *SCREAM QUEENS*

HER MOM IS CARRIE FISHER (AND DAD IS SUPERAGENT BRYAN LOURD).
"My mom made me watch *Star Wars* for the first time when I was about 7 years old. My little ears were definitely not ready for the dramatic music and constant whizzing of lightsabers. She gave up on me watching it for the night, but about a year later I came to her room and asked her to put it on again. This time I was completely enthralled and didn't stop asking her questions the entire time."

SHE BATTLED PRINCESS LEIA.
"I made [my mom] watch it at least once a week—and on special occasions I would make her get in a lightsaber fight with me. Let's just say the more trained Jedi usually won."

LEIA WAS HER ROLE MODEL.
"When I saw the movie for the first time, I noticed my mom was not only equally as confident and strong as the men, she was one of the most confident characters in the entire film. It made me realize women are just as powerful as men and that we can truly do anything they can (if not more!)."

simon PEGG

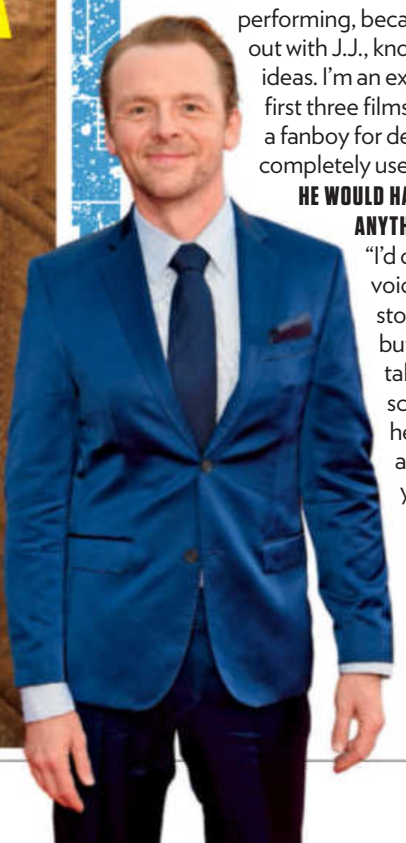
AGE: 45
HOMETOWN: GLOUCESTER, ENGLAND
KNOWN FOR: *STAR TREK*, THE *MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE* SERIES

HE'LL BE IN COSTUME ON JAKKU—BUT STILL RECOGNIZABLE.
"You'll definitely see me because I speak and I have a role to play [in the story]. I cannot wait to be able to talk about it, because this character is extraordinary."

HE'S ALREADY BEEN INTO SPACE WITH J.J. ABRAMS.
"The first *Star Trek* movie that J.J. made [with Pegg as Scotty] is about a young, idealistic farm boy who goes off" on a space adventure. "It was *Star Trek* in a slightly more *Star Wars*-y way, which was the appeal of that reboot."

HE'S A *STAR WARS* SUPERFAN.
"The whole experience for me was a series of strange dreams come true. I was on-set even when I wasn't performing, because I'd hang out with J.J., knocking around ideas. I'm an expert on the first three films. Being a fanboy for decades wasn't completely useless."

HE WOULD HAVE PLAYED ANYTHING.
"I'd do a droid voice or a stormtrooper, but J.J. and I talked about the screenplay, and he said, 'There's a role I'd like you to play.'"

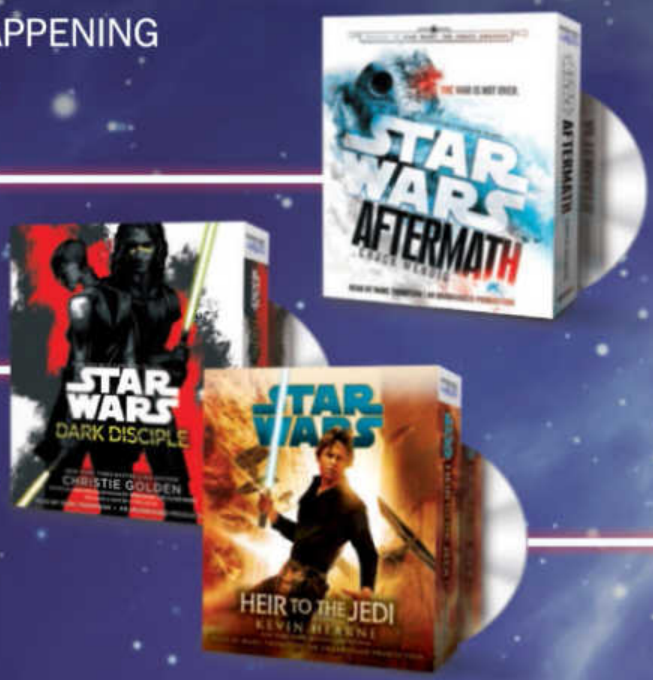


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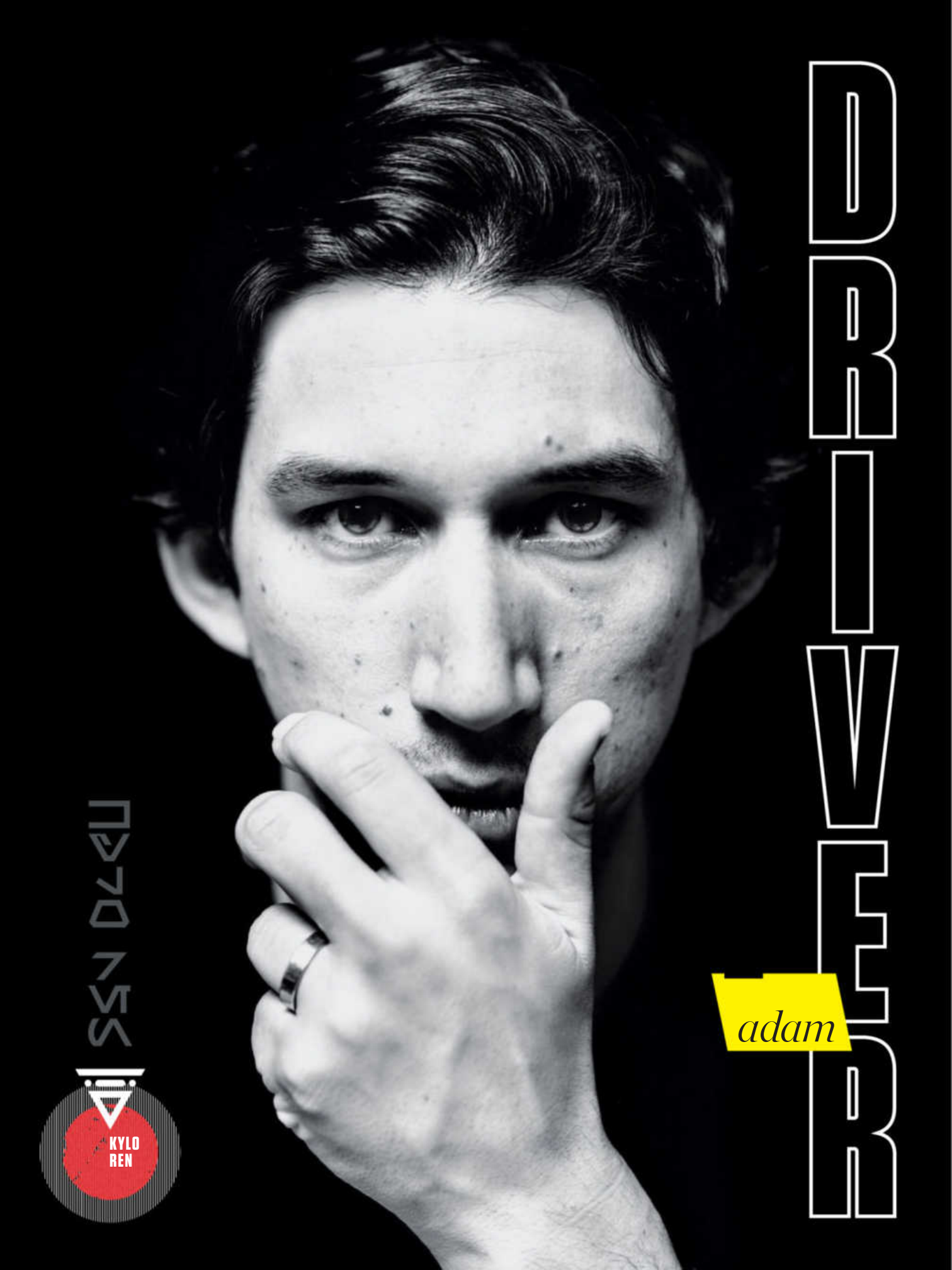


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DRIVER
adam
KYLO REN



DARTH REDUX
Dark Side warrior Kylo Ren (Driver, center) casts his lot with the malevolent First Order forces.

AGE: 32
HOMETOWN: MISHAWAKA, IND.
KNOWN FOR: HBO'S *GIRLS*

HE'S A DIFFERENT LEADING MAN.
"I have been told before that I have an unusual face," Driver said to *The Guardian* earlier this year. "But my face is my face. I had a whole life before acting. Over the years lots of things have been said about my face."

HE WAS A U.S. MARINE.
An almost fatal explosion during his Marine training eventually led him to enroll at Juilliard. Driver told NPR in August, "I'm like, 'The two things I want to do before I die are smoke and be an actor.'"

HE'S A UNIQUE BAD GUY.
"Adam came onto the movie relatively early," says *The Force Awakens* cowriter Lawrence Kasdan. "He very much influenced the character: his rhythms, how unique Adam is."

HE LIKES GOING OFF-SCRIPT.
"J.J. made everything very tactile, and [filming] kind of felt impromptu," he said during a Lucasfilm interview at last summer's San Diego Comic-Con. "It kind of felt like making it up as we go along."

DON'T ASK HIM FOR A SELFIE.
"Reactions in the street are always good," he told *The Guardian* about being recognized more by fans. "They usually see that I'm more scared of them than they are of me, and the whole power dynamic shifts."



***GIRLS* FRIENDS**
"We're VERY proud of Adam Driver re: Star Wars," *Girls*' Lena Dunham tweeted when he was cast. "He's about to rip a hole in da force."

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: JEFF VESPA/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES; DAVID JAMES/© 2015 LUCASFILM LTD.; HBO/EVERETT



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: BRIAN BOWEN SMITH; ELENA DORFMAN/©2015 LUCASFILM LTD; HELEN SLOAN/HBO/EVERETT COLLECTION; HELEN SLOAN/HBO



DARK AND STORMY Captain Phasma (Christie) may be *Star Wars*' strongest woman yet.



JUDGE HER BY HER SIZE DO YOU? The *6'3"* Christie (as *Game of Thrones*' Brienne of Tarth with costar Nikolaj Coster-Waldau) says, "I like playing characters that challenge the way we have conventionally looked at women."

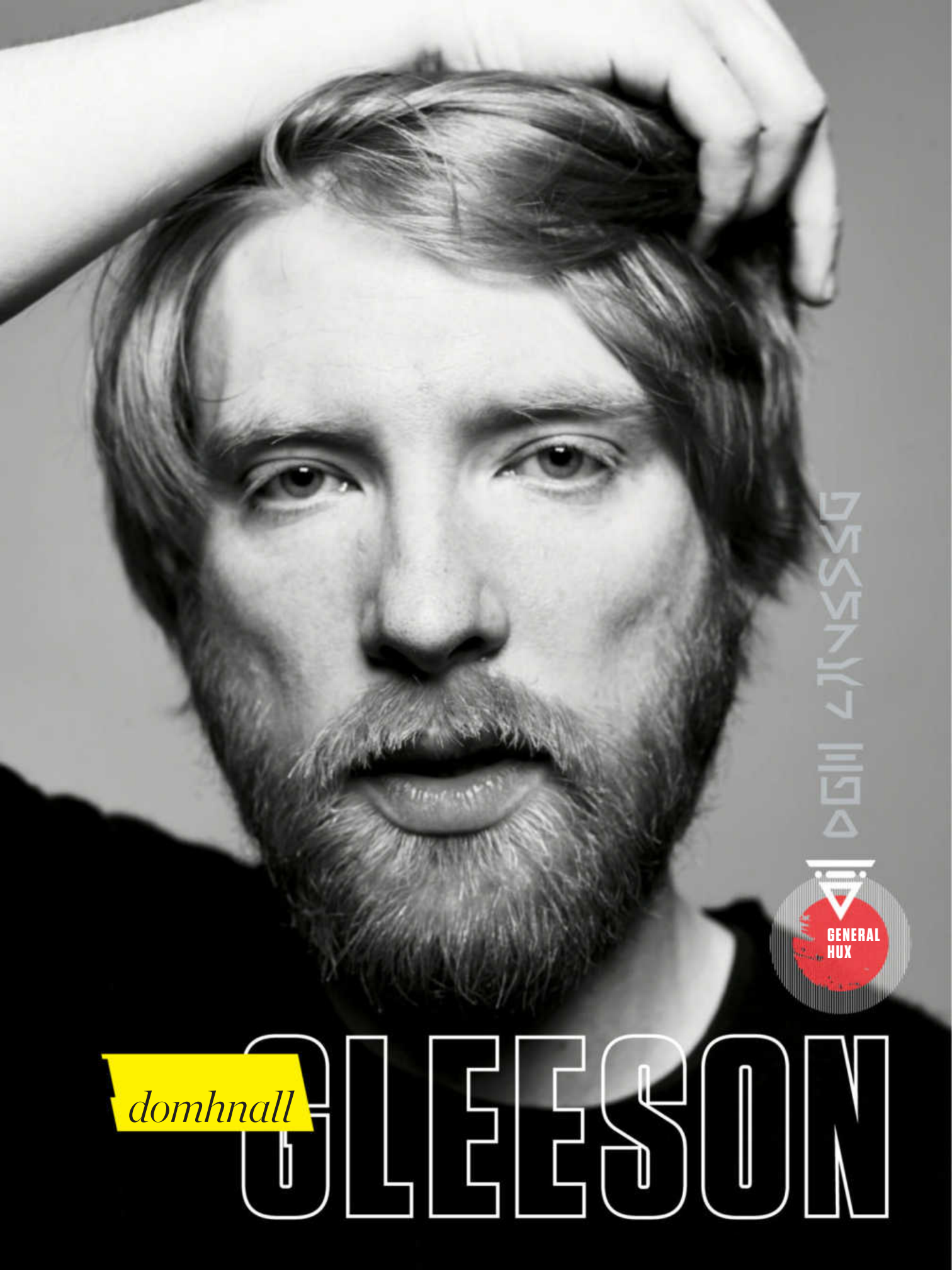
AGE: 37
HOMETOWN: WORTHING, ENGLAND
KNOWN FOR: *GAME OF THRONES*

LEIA WAS HER KIND OF PRINCESS. "The first *Star Wars* was a fantastical and captivating world unlike our own, but the characters were so intriguing and human. I loved this gang of misfits. I remember Princess Leia making a real impression on me: a woman who knew her own mind and was resolute."

SHE'S A SOFTIE FOR *STAR WARS*. "I never dreamed that such a wonderful film that I have held dear since I was little would become such a real part of my life. I have to pinch myself every day."

HER PHASMA IS THE NEW FETT. "I play Captain Phasma, who is a First Order stormtrooper commander and a member of the Dark Side. She is a Boba Fett-style character, striking and in command but not at the very forefront of the action always. Other than that, all I can say is that she is *badass*."

SHE'S A PRO AT ACTING IN ARMOR. "Captain Phasma looks incredible, but more than that, we respond to her character. We relate to most female characters due to how attractive they are. She is covered in armor, so it's her actions we respond to."


domhnall
GLEESON
GENERAL
HUX

AGE: 32
HOMETOWN: DUBLIN
KNOWN FOR: *UNBROKEN*, *BROOKLYN*

HE WAS IN *HARRY POTTER* (A LITTLE). He played Ron Weasley's older brother Bill. "I was a very small part of *Harry Potter*," he says. "To matter to people you don't even know, that is lovely and a privilege. I'm excited, but it's not like, 'Aren't I the best?' You would be a maniac."

THIS TIME HE'S ON THE DARK SIDE. "I think General Hux would just like a little bit more order in the universe. Whatever it takes is where he's at."

HE DIDN'T ASK LEO FOR ADVICE. "Leo [DiCaprio, his costar in December's *The Revenant*] never took me aside and said, 'I hear you're in *Star Wars*. Here are my Leo tips: You want a hat to pull over your eyes.' I've got a good group back home to give me advice, including my dad," acclaimed Irish actor Brendan Gleeson, who played "Mad-Eye" Moody in *Harry Potter*.

HIS FAVORITE ROLE THIS YEAR ISN'T IN *STAR WARS* OR *THE REVENANT*. "I did a play at the start of the year with my father and brother, which I think will be the best job I ever do."

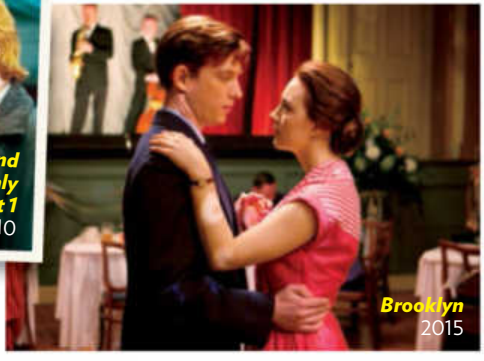
HE WANTS HIS HUX ACTION FIGURE. "I'm not a cool chrome stormtrooper, so I hope I get a toy. If I don't, I'm going to call J.J. and be super pissed off."

WHO IS HUX? One clue he's evil, says Gleeson: He speaks with a British accent, like most *Star Wars* villains.





Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1
2010



Brooklyn
2015

ACTING IS STRONG IN HIS FAMILY Dad Brendan Gleeson (left, in September) teamed with Domhnall in a play last year. Above: In *Potter*. Right: With Saoirse Ronan.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: PETER HAPAK; DAVID JAMES/©2015 LUCASFILM LTD; KERRY BROWN; WARNER BROS/EVERETT; TODD WILLIAMSON/GETTY IMAGES

THE MAGICAL WORLD OF *andy* SERKIS

WHILE THE LOOK OF HIS BAD GUY **SUPREME LEADER SNOKE** IS STILL A MYSTERY, YOU CAN TRUST THIS VIRTUOSO TO CREATE A CGI CHARACTER TO REMEMBER





KING KONG
King Kong
"He's like a lonely, psychotic hobo who's past his prime. I wanted him to be as gorilla as possible but give him big emotional range," Serkis told *People*.



CAESAR
Planet of the Apes series
The alpha ape and all his characters "are driven by one thing: acting," he told the *Telegraph*.



GOLLUM
The Lord of the Rings
"Gollum's never really gone too far away from me," he told the *Los Angeles Times* of his breakthrough CGI character, "because he's indelibly kind of printed into my DNA now."



CAPTAIN HADDOCK
The Adventures of Tintin
Portraying Tintin's friend was the opposite of Serkis's evil *Star Wars* role, of which "all I can say is that I'm involved in it and the character I play is … oh, I can't tell you that bit."



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: GARETH CATTERMOLE/GETTY IMAGES; UNIVERSAL/EVERETT; TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX FILM CORPORATION/PHOTOFEST (2); PARAMOUNT/EVERETT; PIERRE VINET/NEW LINE CINEMA/PHOTOFEST; NEW LINE CINEMA/EVERETT













The countdown to Christmas.

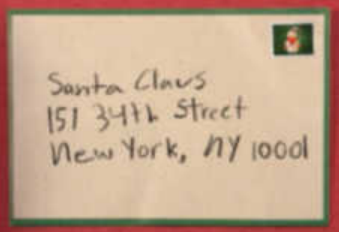
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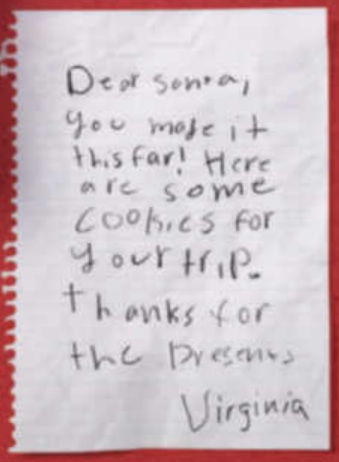
















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Paper & Packaging
How life unfolds:

R2-D2 & C-3PO

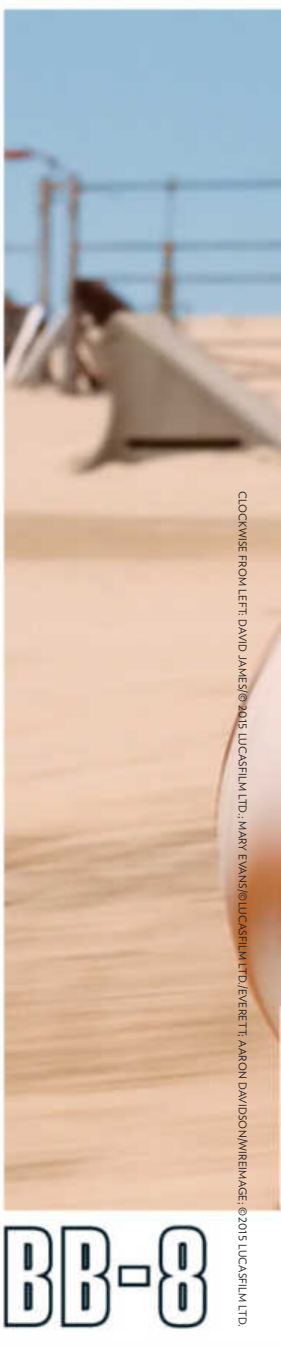
THESE DROIDS ARE DINOSAURS. "In *Star Wars* tech, droids have moved on," says Neal Scanlan, head of the *Star Wars* creature shop. "Poor R2 is clunky and slightly Victorian now."

ANTHONY DANIELS MUST BE C-3PO. "J.J. Abrams said, 'Would you consider just doing the voice?'" recalls Daniels, now 69. "I said, 'Nope.' He said, 'Right,' and we carried on. But I said the costume needed redesigning. It's now 3-D printed."

C-3PO'S RED ARM IS A MYSTERY. "That red arm? All this is so secret," says Daniels. "If you let everybody know, it kills the impact."

THESE ARE EXACTLY THE DROIDS WE'RE LOOKING FOR AS **OLD & NEW** MODELS TAKE ON ANOTHER IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

DR



BB-8

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: DAVID JAMES/© 2015 LUCASFILM LTD.; MARY EVANS/©LUCASFILM LTD./EVERETT; AARON DAVIDSON/WIREIMAGE; © 2015 LUCASFILM LTD.

DS



THIS IS R2-D2'S SON, SORT OF. Based on a sketch Abrams drew on a napkin, "BB-8 is the next generation from R2," Scanlan says.

BB-8 IS A BALL OF PERSONALITY. "We always saw BB-8 as a naughty puppy or a very clever little child. They know how to be coy, how to be cute, how to sulk, how to pull at heartstrings to get what they want."

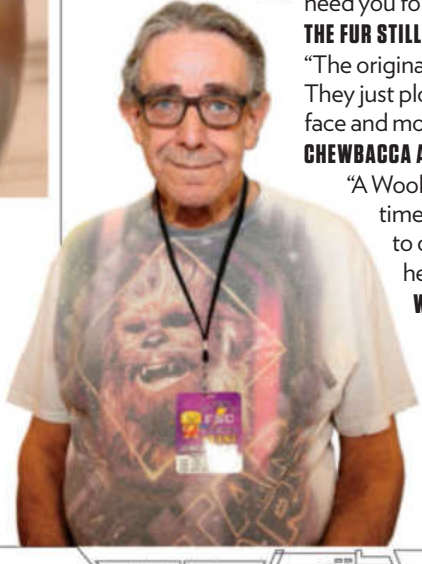
HE'S ON A MISSION WITH REY. "Daisy Ridley spent a lot of time around BB-8, who is using all these tricks to transport himself on this important journey. He's on a mission, and he has to succeed."



& CHEWIE

peter MAYHEW

AGE: 71
HOMETOWN: YORKSHIRE, ENGLAND
KNOWN FOR: FIVE *STAR WARS* MOVIES



HE'S NOW A PART-TIME WOOKIEE. "Both my knees were replaced, so I explained to J.J. Abrams I could only do so much. He said, 'Don't worry. We'll find someone big [to be a stand-in] and make you as comfortable as possible. What we need you for are the close-ups.'"

THE FUR STILL FITS HIM BEAUTIFULLY. "The original costume was remade. They just plonked the mask on my face and modified it as necessary."

CHEWBACCA AGES MORE SLOWLY THAN HE DOES. "A Wookiee survives over a period of time. Chewie's a baby compared to other Wookiees even though he's over 100 years old."

WORKING WITH HARRISON AGAIN REALLY WAS LIKE COMING HOME. "On-set, Harrison knocked on my door, gave me a great big hug and said, 'Hey, buddy! You've got to get back in the old suit again?' It was wonderful."



the Filmmakers

JEDI MASTERS



MAKING THE JUMP Director J.J. Abrams and Lucasfilm president Kathleen Kennedy take control of the *Millennium Falcon* and the *Star Wars* franchise.

TERS

THANKS TO DISNEY'S **FILMMAKERS AND EXECS,** *STAR WARS* IS AGAIN MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU CAN POSSIBLY IMAGINE



DIRECTOR
j.j.
ABRAMS

HE FIRST SAW *STAR WARS* AT 11.
"It was the coolest-looking, most adventurous, most thrilling, greatest score, incredible sound-effects experience I'd ever had. As a kid, it was a mind-expanding amazement."

HE'S EXPLORING *STAR WARS: THE NEXT GENERATION*.
"Kathleen Kennedy brought up the idea of 'Who is Luke Skywalker?' and it struck me that there would be a young generation for whom Luke Skywalker might as well be an ancient myth. George Lucas told a story about everyman, everywoman characters who were nobodies who had to step up and become somebody. The idea that there would be a new crop of nobodies in the *Star Wars* universe who didn't realize yet they would become somebody, that was a very powerful feeling."

HE HAD TO STOP BEING A FANBOY.
"If we got intoxicated by the nostalgia of what we were doing, the movie was gonna suck. We had to very quickly move on to the job at hand, which was to be actors and crew members and filmmakers and directors and do the work we were all there to do."

HE MADE THE MOVIE FOR EVERYONE.
"It's ultimately about family, friendship and loyalty. The action is badass with incredibly wonderful actors in some heart-pounding set pieces."

GEORGE LUCAS DECLINED HIS OFFER OF A SNEAK PREVIEW.
"He said he would rather wait and see it when it was done."

THE ORIGINAL SHOWED HER THE POWER OF A BLOCKBUSTER.
"I was in film school, so it was pretty mind-blowing how much of a game-changer that movie was."

SHE LOVES SEEING THE OLD AND NEW COLLIDE.
"There are new ideas inside the world that people are familiar with. The new characters are doing a scene inside the *Millennium Falcon* and in walk Chewie and Harrison. That's just icing on the cake."

SHE ASKED J.J. TO ADDRESS "WHO IS LUKE SKYWALKER?"
"When I first came into Lucasfilm for George, we knew the story would take place 30 years after *Return of the Jedi*. That was one of the questions that might be asked by one of the characters inside Episode VII. When I said that to J.J., he immediately got chills."

SHE'S COY ABOUT ANY NEW REVEAL LIKE "I AM YOUR FATHER."
"I hesitate to say [there's a moment in this movie] literally in comparison to that, but something with that level of power, I certainly hope so."

PRODUCER
kathleen
KENNEDY





CHAIRMAN,
WALT DISNEY STUDIOS
alan
HORN

HE BELIEVES IN THE FORCE.
"I was very moved by the positive aspects of the Force. I love Darth Vader and Yoda."

TO HIM, J.J. IS THE CHOSEN ONE.
"He has story sense, humor and experience with effects. This is deep, resonant art."

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bob IGER

HE'S A FAN FROM THE BEGINNING.
"I saw the original *Star Wars* when it came out. It seemed like the best theme-park attraction I'd ever ridden. I felt like something had shifted in both the moviemaking and moviegoing experience."

HE'S AMAZED THIS IS HIS DESTINY.
"If someone had told me then that I would be CEO of a company making a *Star Wars* film, I would have told them they were out of their mind!"

HE HUNG OUT ON THE *FALCON*.
"I've had a lot of geek-out moments. I visited the set a few times. Standing with Harrison Ford on the *Millennium Falcon*, that's not a bad moment. Getting a hug from Carrie Fisher when she was in costume, reading the script for the first time, seeing your name on it, oh boy. I'm a lucky guy."

STAR WARS CREATOR

george LUCAS

HE WANTED TO MAKE A CLASSIC HERO'S STORY.
"My main reason for making *Star Wars* was to give young people an honest, wholesome fantasy life the way we had," Lucas, who directed the original film and Episodes I to III, told *People* in 1977. "All they've got now is Kojak and Dirty Harry."

HE OBSESSED OVER CASTING LUKE, LEIA AND HAN.
"I'd seen thousands of people," he has said. "It was a very complicated procedure that took nine months to go through. It wasn't a 'That's the one!' kind of thing."





VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT, LUCASFILM

kiri HART

SHE OVERSEES ALL OF DISNEY'S *STAR WARS* CONTENT.
"I hover over what's going on in features, in animation . . ."

THE NEWBIES ARE CRUCIAL.
"This film has new characters who are really compelling and who you love. If that's not right, then the rest doesn't matter."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: MILLER MOBLEY/AUGUST IMAGES; JOEL ARON; 20TH CENTURY FOX/EVERETT

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the SCENES



MAKING 'MASSIVE MOMENTS'
Director J.J. Abrams discusses a scene set on the desert planet of Jakku with Daisy Ridley as Rey. "The thing about J.J.'s scripts is, as a cinematographer, it is hugely intimidating to read them in a cold way," says Daniel Mindel, who rejoins Abrams as cinematographer after working together on two *Star Trek* movies and *Mission: Impossible III*. "First, my initial instinct is, 'How are we going to do that?!' They're just massive moments. So the place I start is, 'How does the atmosphere of this movie feel?' That will guide me to the next place, which is how we get that from paper to film."

MAY THE FORCE BE WITH ALL OF YOU
The cast of *The Force Awakens* gathered for their first script reading in April 2014. "This was a very emotional moment with all these new people in the mix," says co-screenwriter Lawrence Kasdan (top center). "To hear Harrison and Carrie and Mark reading, it was startling to everybody. That's the character. It didn't take anything for them to get back into it."



CAPTURING THE LIGHT
Mindel checks the light on-set. "For George Lucas the difficulty on *Star Wars* was it hadn't been done before," he says. "Now at any moment we can refer to visuals instantly. That gives us a bit of an edge over the first movie."

PREVIOUS SPREAD & THIS SPREAD: DAVID JAMES/©2015 LUCASFILM LTD.(4)



FIRED UP
Abrams (left) guides John Boyega's aim in a fiery Jakku battle. Special-effects supervisor Chris Corbould, known for epic action sequences in Bond films and *The Dark Knight*, says, "You get a totally different reaction from the actors when you have real explosions going off as opposed to when you're reacting to something in green screen. They experience the shock wave, the heat, the adrenaline."



QUEEN OF THE DESERT Ridley copes with the heat of Jakku. "When we find Daisy's character, Rey, in the desert and she's a scavenger, Abrams said, 'I really want to see her; I don't want to see her with amazing makeup or anything,'" says Amanda Knight, head of the makeup department. "'She's gotta look like she lived there, and be dirty and be sweaty.' She had a spray tan every day to make her look like she was living in that environment."



THE CREATURE BEHIND THE MASK
Costume designer Michael Kaplan touches up Captain Ithano, a character from Maz Kanata's palace (who appears in a *Star Wars* spinoff book called *The Crimson Corsair and the Lost Treasure of Count Dooku*). "With every character we invented a backstory," says Neal Scanlan, head of the creature shop.



POINTERS FROM HAN
Harrison Ford, as Han Solo, discusses a scene with Abrams. "No one had seen Harrison very much before *Star Wars*," says Kasdan, who's also working with his son Jon on a Han Solo origin movie, to be released in 2018. "Now there's an enormous history, and the original cast was full of good ideas. It fell to J.J. and me to write the screenplay that became the essence of that history."

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: ELENA DORFMAN/©2015 LUCASFILM LTD.; DAVID JAMES/©2015 LUCASFILM LTD. (2)





MAKING IT LOOK EASY

Ridley is surrounded by hairstylists on-set in Abu Dhabi. "For Rey's hair we jokingly called the style the Three Knobs," says Lisa Tomblin, chief hair designer. "I was trying to do something that would be iconic, simple, realistic, but not something where you're always just looking at her hair. Princess Leia had one of the most iconic hairstyles in the history of cinema. So it's quite a big thing to come up with the next one."

DAVID JAMES/©2015 LUCASFILM LTD. (2)



THE REAL FACE OF MAZ
Abrams directs Lupita Nyong'o as the mysterious computer-generated character Maz Kanata. "Maz actually went through many stages of whether she could be a puppet, whether she could be a person in a suit, whether she could be digital," Scanlan says. "CGI gave J.J. the freedom to be able to explore all of the creative avenues."

STORYTELLERS
Kasdan confers with Abrams on-set. "Once Luke's father was revealed, everything changed" in the scope of the series, says Kasdan, who cowrote Episodes V, VI and now VII. "It just made people feel like *Star Wars* can be big." The new movie "has a full range of scenes," he adds. "It's got a lot of *New Hope*'s goofy fun along with real emotions."



GOLDEN BOD
Anthony Daniels has now played C-3PO in all seven *Star Wars* films, though this time the suit was (a bit) more comfortable. "Only I wear the suit because nobody else is crazy enough," he says. "I got this wonderfully clever, skilled, thoughtful, kind crew who came up with some little ideas just to make the suit work better. I'm hugely grateful for that. But I'd still rather be playing Luke Skywalker. He has clothes he can sit down in. We all suffer for our art; my own is being locked away from the world."

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STAR WARS THE FORCE AWAKENS

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